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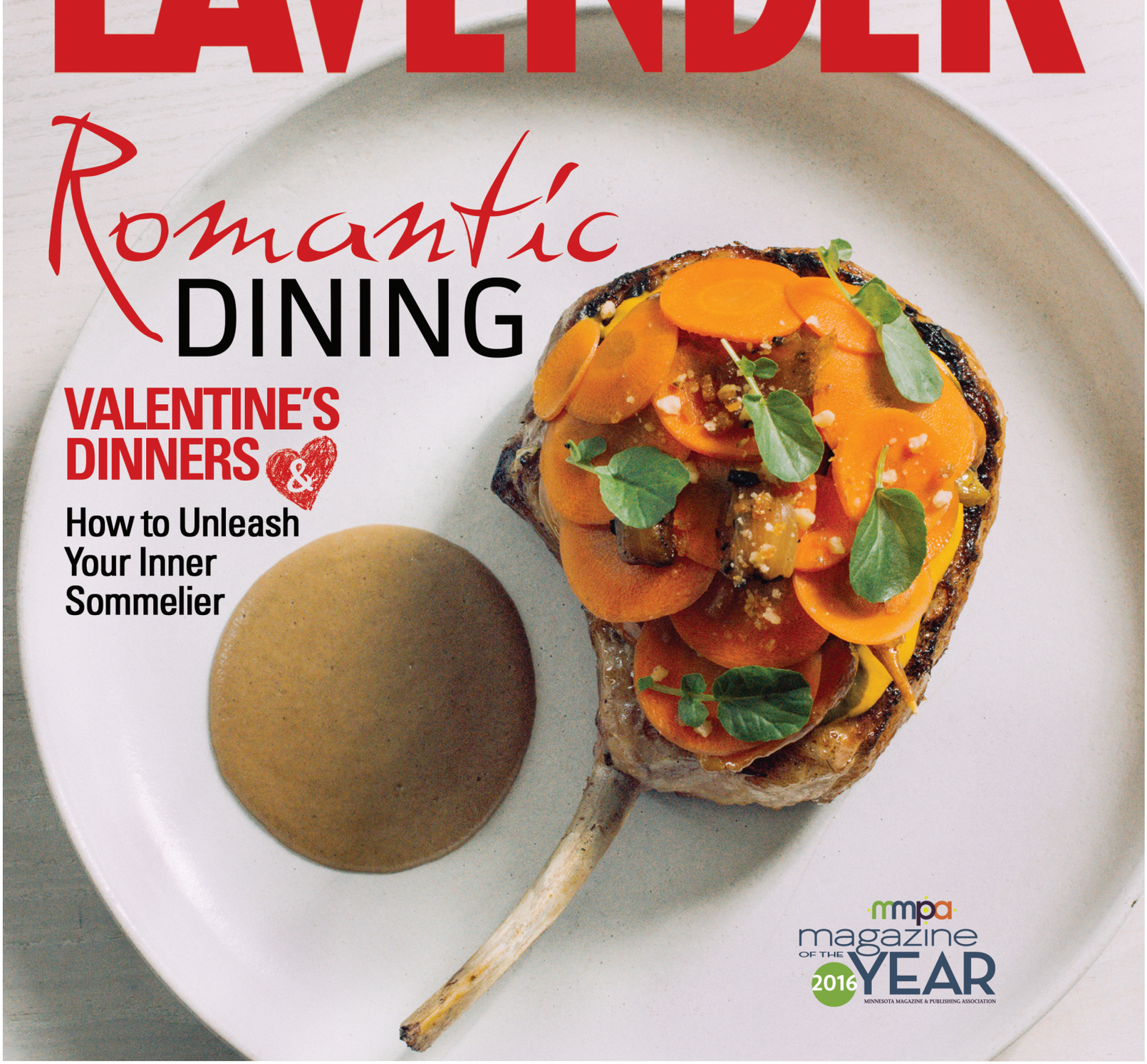
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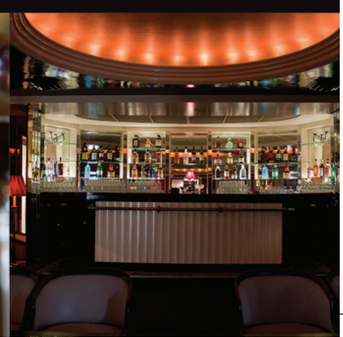
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ON THE COVER

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FROM THE EDITOR | BY ANDY LIEN

Food Crushes

Romantic dining. Not always candlelit, but usually evocative. A place that invites l'amour, a menu that pleases the senses, and service that rivals the attention of your date. That last one might sound a little funny, but there is something about excellent front-of-house service in a restaurant that can be a surrogate for a date on any day, Valentine's or not.

I don't know about you, but I tend to order a specific dish when I go to a restaurant, visiting it like it's an old friend (see the cover...I sing love songs to Upton 43's pork chop, no lie). Here's my short list of food crushes that you might want to sample yourself, whether or not you've got the love bug.

Blue Door Pub's Spam Bites: balls of cream cheese with diced Spam and pickles in the middle, rolled in potato chips and panko then deep fried. Wise Acre Eatery's Bacon: somehow, bacon can be done so perfectly that I call it out as my favorite food in the place. Red Cow's 60/40 Burger: a burger made of both ground beef and ground bacon topped with cheese, candied bacon, and mustard. Corner Table's Pork Belly: perfectly fall-apart firm with plenty of fatty give and a daub of mustard. Spoon & Stable's Crepe Cake: layers and layers of cream and crepes making a tower of delicacy. Harbor View Cafe's Almond Cake: chewy, fragrant, and reminiscent of all-things-Nordic. Lake & Irving's Brussels Sprouts: crispy and burnt, buttery and earthy. Wilde Cafe's Famous Mac & Cheese: if you love me, you'll get me this pasta dish. Mucci's Italian Everything: I kid you not, I love everything on that dang menu and it causes me pain to choose only a few things each time I go there. World Street Kitchen's Bangkok Korean BBQ Beef Short Rib Burrito: just the right balance of spicy and sweet... like me. Rabbit Hole's Harold & Kumar Poutine: fries, pork curry gravy, kimchi, cheese, aioli, and so many cultures in my mouth. Izzy's Strawberry Creme Fraiche Ice Cream: just the sweetest part of summer, all year 'round. The Salty Tart's Ham & Cheese Croissant: flaky, buttery, and a little pocket feast to go. D'Amico & Sons' Chicken with Dried Cherries Salad: it's the classic pasta salad that never fails me, year after year. Cafe Latte's Classic Vanilla Cheesecake: my favorite in the world.

So, though I free-associated that list, I realized I could go on forever. I am actually forcing myself to stop adding to it, I only have a half-page here. But, it boils down to that I love food. It's a very natural association for me, love and food, for better and worse. I don't know what I'm doing for the big V-Day yet, myself, but the spirit of romance and how the way to my heart is through my stomach will be observed and celebrated.

With you and with love,

Andy ■



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They've All Got Little Lists

After two centuries of sequestration, Japan reopened its doors in the 1850s. In 1872, Japonisme (influence of Japanese art and aesthetics) entered the vocabulary of many European artists, and ukiyo-e prints were popularized: Van Gogh surrounds "The Portrait of Père Tanguy" (1887) with six of them. In 1885, British Victorian librettist W.S. Gilbert and composer Arthur Sullivan, opened their *The Mikado*, an operetta with a then-exotic Japanese setting.

One hundred thirty-one years later, last October, there was widespread criticism of the Harvard-Radcliffe Gilbert and Sullivan Players' production of this same operetta accusing HGRSP of racism, cultural appropriation, gender violence, and harmful perceptions of trans people. This after the group had updated the setting to a 1960s Vegas-themed Oriental hotel to avoid any such accusations.

HRGSP formed in 1956, staging their shows in the University's Agassiz Theater, where I saw *Mikado* in 1965; a delightful, sprightly performance readily understood as Gilbert and Sullivan's satire of British mores and not a take-down of Japanese people or culture.

A classmate commented recently, "As a literature scholar and a historian, I'm very hostile to this sort of retroactive political correctness. My program note for The Mikado would say that it's in a long tradition of criticizing one's own country by writing about a real or imagined foreign state, or writing from the point of view of a foreigner visiting one's country."

He added, "A member of the S.F. School Board recently suggested renaming George Washington High School because Washington was a slave-owner…Washington married a wealthy widow, Martha Custis, who had two children. She held in trust for them her husband's property — which included a lot of slaves. Those slaves intermarried with Washington's slaves and Washington was unable to untangle the complicated intertwining of lives. When he was dying, he dictated his last will, in which he freed those slaves he had the power to free, and set aside an endowment to help them deal with freedom.

Watchdogs howl for the banning of Samuel Clemens's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and other victims. Their closed-minded literary bowdlerizing will keep valuable life lessons away from young readers, while ruining otherwise enjoyable evenings of musical satire for the rest of us. ■

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What is TRUVADA for PrEP (Pre-exposure Prophylaxis)?

TRUVADA is a prescription medicine that can be used for PrEP to help reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 infection when used together with safer sex practices. This use is only for adults who are at high risk of getting HIV-1 through sex. This includes HIV-negative men who have sex with men and who are at high risk of getting infected with HIV-1 through sex, and male-female sex partners when one partner has HIV-1 infection and the other does not.

Ask your healthcare provider if you have questions about how to prevent getting HIV-1. Always practice safer sex and use condoms to lower the chance of sexual contact with body fluids. Never reuse or share needles or other items that have body fluids on them.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

What is the most important information I should know about TRUVADA for PrEP?

Before taking TRUVADA for PrEP to reduce your risk of getting HIV-1 infection:

- **You must be HIV-negative.** You must get tested to make sure that you do not already have HIV-1 infection. Do not take TRUVADA for PrEP to reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 unless you are confirmed to be HIV-negative.
- **Many HIV-1 tests can miss HIV-1 infection in a person who has recently become infected.** If you have flu-like symptoms, you could have recently become infected with HIV-1. Tell your healthcare provider if you had a flu-like illness within the last month before starting TRUVADA for PrEP or at any time while taking TRUVADA for PrEP. Symptoms of new HIV-1 infection include tiredness, fever, joint or muscle aches, headache, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, night sweats, and/or enlarged lymph nodes in the neck or groin.

While taking TRUVADA for PrEP to reduce your risk of getting HIV-1 infection:

- **You must continue using safer sex practices. Just taking TRUVADA for PrEP may not keep you from getting HIV-1.**
- **You must stay HIV-negative to keep taking TRUVADA for PrEP.**
- **To further help reduce your risk of getting HIV-1:**
  - Know your HIV-1 status and the HIV-1 status of your partners.
  - Get tested for HIV-1 at least every 3 months or when your healthcare provider tells you.
  - Get tested for other sexually transmitted infections. Other infections make it easier for HIV-1 to infect you.
  - Get information and support to help reduce risky sexual behavior.
  - Have fewer sex partners.
  - Do not miss any doses of TRUVADA. Missing doses may increase your risk of getting HIV-1 infection.
  - If you think you were exposed to HIV-1, tell your healthcare provider right away.
- **If you do become HIV-1 positive, you need more medicine than TRUVADA alone to treat HIV-1**. TRUVADA by itself is not a complete treatment for HIV-1. If you have HIV-1 and take only TRUVADA, your HIV-1 may become harder to treat over time.

TRUVADA can cause serious side effects:

- **Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis)**, which is a serious medical emergency. Symptoms of lactic acidosis include weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, nausea, vomiting, stomach-area pain, cold or blue hands and feet, feeling dizzy or lightheaded, and/or fast or abnormal heartbeats.
- **Serious liver problems.** Your liver may become large and tender, and you may develop fat in your liver. Symptoms of liver problems include your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark "tea-colored" urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, and/or stomach-area pain.
- **You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or serious liver problems** if you are female, very overweight (obese), or have been taking TRUVADA for a long time. In some cases, these serious conditions have led to death. Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any symptoms of these conditions.
- **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection.** If you also have HBV and take TRUVADA, your hepatitis may become worse if you stop taking TRUVADA. Do not stop taking TRUVADA without first talking to your healthcare provider. If your healthcare provider tells you to stop taking TRUVADA, they will need to watch you closely for several months to monitor your health. TRUVADA is not approved for the treatment of HBV.

Who should not take TRUVADA for PrEP?

Do not take TRUVADA for PrEP if you already have HIV-1 infection or if you do not know your HIV-1 status. If you are HIV-1 positive, you need to take other medicines with TRUVADA to treat HIV-1. TRUVADA by itself is not a complete treatment for HIV-1. If you have HIV-1 and take only TRUVADA, your HIV-1 may become harder to treat over time.

Do not take TRUVADA for PrEP if you also take lamivudine (Epivir-HBV) or adefovir (HEPSERA).



What are the other possible side effects of TRUVADA for PrEP?

Serious side effects of TRUVADA may also include:

- **Kidney problems, including kidney failure**. Your healthcare provider may do blood tests to check your kidneys before and during treatment with TRUVADA for PrEP. If you develop kidney problems, your healthcare provider may tell you to stop taking TRUVADA for PrEP.
- **Bone problems**, including bone pain or bones getting soft or thin, may lead to fractures. Your healthcare provider may do tests to check your bones.
- **Changes in body fat**, which can happen in people taking TRUVADA or medicines like TRUVADA.

Common side effects in people taking TRUVADA for PrEP are stomach-area (abdomen) pain, headache, and decreased weight. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effects that bother you or do not go away.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking TRUVADA for PrEP?

- **All your health problems.** Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if you have or have had any kidney, bone, or liver problems, including hepatitis virus infection.
- **If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant**. It is not known if TRUVADA can harm your unborn baby. If you become pregnant while taking TRUVADA for PrEP, talk to your healthcare provider to decide if you should keep taking TRUVADA for PrEP.
  Pregnancy Registry: A pregnancy registry collects information about your health and the health of your baby. There is a pregnancy registry for women who take medicines to prevent HIV-1 during pregnancy. For more information about the registry and how it works, talk to your healthcare provider.
- **If you are breastfeeding** (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed. The medicines in TRUVADA can pass to your baby in breast milk. If you become HIV-1 positive, HIV-1 can be passed to the baby in breast milk.
- **All the medicines you take**, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. TRUVADA may interact with other medicines. Keep a list of all your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.
- **If you take certain other medicines** with TRUVADA for PrEP, your healthcare provider may need to check you more often or change your dose. These medicines include ledipasvir with sofosbuvir (HARVONI).

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.FDA.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Please see Important Facts about TRUVADA for PrEP including important warnings on the following page.



Have you heard about

TRUVADA for PrEP™?

The **once-daily prescription medicine** that can help reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 when used **with safer sex practices**.

- TRUVADA for PrEP is only for **adults who are at high risk of getting HIV through sex**.
- You **must be HIV-negative** before you start taking TRUVADA.

Ask your doctor about your risk of getting HIV-1 infection and if TRUVADA for PrEP may be right for you.

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IMPORTANT FACTS

This is only a brief summary of important information about taking TRUVADA for PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) to help reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 infection. This does not replace talking to your healthcare provider about your medicine.

MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT TRUVADA FOR PrEP

Before starting TRUVADA for PrEP to help reduce your risk of getting HIV-1 infection:

- **You must be HIV-1 negative.** You must get tested to make sure that you do not already have HIV-1 infection. Do not take TRUVADA for PrEP to reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 unless you are confirmed to be HIV-1 negative.
- **Many HIV-1 tests can miss HIV-1 infection in a person who has recently become infected.** Symptoms of new HIV-1 infection include flu-like symptoms, tiredness, fever, joint or muscle aches, headache, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, night sweats, and/or enlarged lymph nodes in the neck or groin. Tell your healthcare provider if you have had a flu-like illness within the last month before starting TRUVADA for PrEP.

While taking TRUVADA for PrEP to help reduce your risk of getting HIV-1 infection:

- **You must continue using safer sex practices. Just taking TRUVADA for PrEP may not keep you from getting HIV-1.**
- **You must stay HIV-1 negative to keep taking TRUVADA for PrEP.**
- **Tell your healthcare provider if you have a flu-like illness while taking TRUVADA for PrEP.**
- If you think you were exposed to HIV-1, tell your healthcare provider right away.
- **If you do become HIV-1 positive, you need more medicine than TRUVADA alone to treat HIV-1.** If you have HIV-1 and take only TRUVADA, your HIV-1 may become harder to treat over time.
- **See the "How to Further Reduce Your Risk" section for more information.**

TRUVADA may cause serious side effects, including:

- **Buildup of lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis)**, which is a serious medical emergency that can lead to death. Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of these symptoms: weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, nausea, vomiting, stomach-area pain, cold or blue hands and feet, feeling dizzy or lightheaded, and/or fast or abnormal heartbeats.
- **Severe liver problems**, which in some cases can lead to death. Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of these symptoms: your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark "tea-colored" urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, and/or stomach-area pain.
- **Worsening of hepatitis B (HBV) infection**. If you have HBV and take TRUVADA, your hepatitis may become worse if you stop taking TRUVADA. Do not stop taking TRUVADA without first talking to your healthcare provider, as they will need to check your health regularly for several months.

You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or severe liver problems if you are female, very overweight, or have been taking TRUVADA for a long time.

ABOUT TRUVADA FOR PrEP (PRE-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS)

TRUVADA is a prescription medicine used with safer sex practices for PrEP to help reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 infection in adults at high risk:

- HIV-1 negative men who have sex with men and who are at high risk of getting infected with HIV-1 through sex.
- Male-female sex partners when one partner has HIV-1 infection and the other does not.

To help determine your risk, talk openly with your doctor about your sexual health.

Do NOT take TRUVADA for PrEP if you:

- **Already have HIV-1 infection or if you do not know your HIV-1 status.**
- Take lamivudine (Epivir-HBV) or adefovir (HEPSERA).

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF TRUVADA FOR PrEP

TRUVADA can cause serious side effects, including:

- Those in the "Most Important Information About TRUVADA for PrEP" section.
- New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.
- Bone problems.
- Changes in body fat.

Common side effects in people taking TRUVADA for PrEP include stomach-area (abdomen) pain, headache, and decreased weight.

These are not all the possible side effects of TRUVADA. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you have any new symptoms while taking TRUVADA for PrEP.

Your healthcare provider will need to do tests to monitor your health before and during treatment with TRUVADA for PrEP.

BEFORE TAKING TRUVADA FOR PrEP

Tell your healthcare provider if you:

- Have or have had any kidney, bone, or liver problems, including hepatitis infection.
- Have any other medical conditions.
- Are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.
- Are breastfeeding (nursing) or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed if you become HIV-1 positive because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take:

- Keep a list that includes all prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements, and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist.
- Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist about medicines that should not be taken with TRUVADA for PrEP.

HOW TO TAKE TRUVADA FOR PrEP

- **Take 1 tablet once a day, every day**, not just when you think you have been exposed to HIV-1.
- Do not miss any doses. Missing doses may increase your risk of getting HIV-1 infection.
- You **must** practice safer sex by using condoms and you **must** stay HIV-1 negative.

HOW TO FURTHER REDUCE YOUR RISK

- Know your HIV-1 status and the HIV-1 status of your partners.
- Get tested for HIV-1 at least every 3 months or when your healthcare provider tells you.
- Get tested for other sexually transmitted infections. Other infections make it easier for HIV-1 to infect you.
- Get information and support to help reduce risky sexual behavior.
- Have fewer sex partners.
- Do not share needles or personal items that can have blood or body fluids on them.

GET MORE INFORMATION

- This is only a brief summary of important information about TRUVADA for PrEP to reduce the risk of getting HIV-1 infection. Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist to learn more, including how to prevent HIV-1 infection.
- Go to start.truvada.com or call 1-800-GILEAD-5
- If you need help paying for your medicine, visit start.truvada.com for program information.

GILEAD

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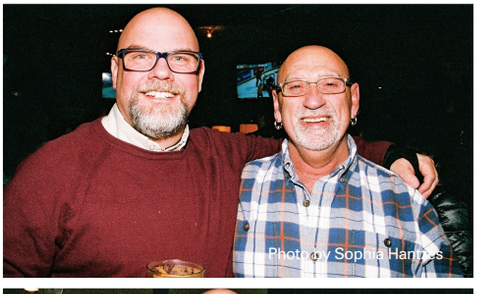






























SPOTLIGHT PRESENTED BY
SOUTH LYNDALE LIQUORS



A View From the Bridge. Photo by Roger Watts

A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

Through Feb. 5
Theatre in the Round Players
245 Cedar Ave., Minneapolis
612-333-2919
www.theatreintheround.org

Arthur Miller looms as one of the classic American playwrights. His socio-political consciousness infuses every play he ever published, but his insights about sexuality and desire have been under-appreciated. The 1955 drama *A View From the Bridge* is rightly noted for its vivid look at the injustices suffered by many immigrants. But there is also a remarkable flashpoint that still stuns today: a drunken kiss reveals a hidden desire one relative has toward another and a juicy attempt to try to convince someone that a gay man is out to marry a female American just to gain citizenship.

Theatre in the Round Players is a solid and steady producer of classic plays and they're an old hand at Miller. Michael Egan leads a 14-member cast. Allen Hamilton directs. Lynn Musgrave crafts the sound design. If you are looking for a show that appeals to a broad audience and still engages the heart and the intellect, then you cannot miss *A View from the Bridge*. That blend is part of Arthur Miller's genius.

DIANA'S GARDEN

Jan. 21–29
Ordway Center
345 Washington St., St. Paul
651-224-4222
www.mnopera.org

Artistic director Dale Johnson says that "one of Minnesota Opera's biggest strengths and joys is finding new and interesting operas to present to our patrons. Our upcoming production of Vincente Martin y Soler's *Diana's Garden* is one of those kinds of pieces. The opera has fallen out of the repertoire since its premiere, but was exceedingly popular in its day. In this rediscovered gem from the Mozart era, you will hear a delightful score, perfect for a light frolic during January in Minnesota."

Soprano Leah Partridge makes her Minnesota Opera debut as Diana. Tenor Alek Shrader makes his house debut. Peter Rothstein, known for his superlative Guthrie Theater and Theater Latte Da productions directs. Michael Christie conducts. *Diana's Garden* is noted for its sensuality, which was controversial in its day, and for its wit.

MIRANDA

Jan. 21–29
Illusion Theatre
Cowles Center, 528 Hennepin Ave.
Minneapolis
612-339-4944
www.illusiontheater.org

Ever since the Greeks and Romans, the Yemeni port city of Aden at the south end of the Arabian peninsula has been a focal point of international trade. During the Middle Ages Islam was firmly established. Later on, the British, with their signature imperialism, took control in the late 1830s and left in 1968. In recent years Yemen's position as a place where East meets West has caused it to become embroiled in grisly conflicts involving Al Qaeda, Saudi Arabia, and the U.S.

Illusion Theater is presenting a new suspense drama, which it began developing



Miranda. Photo by Lauren B Photography

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

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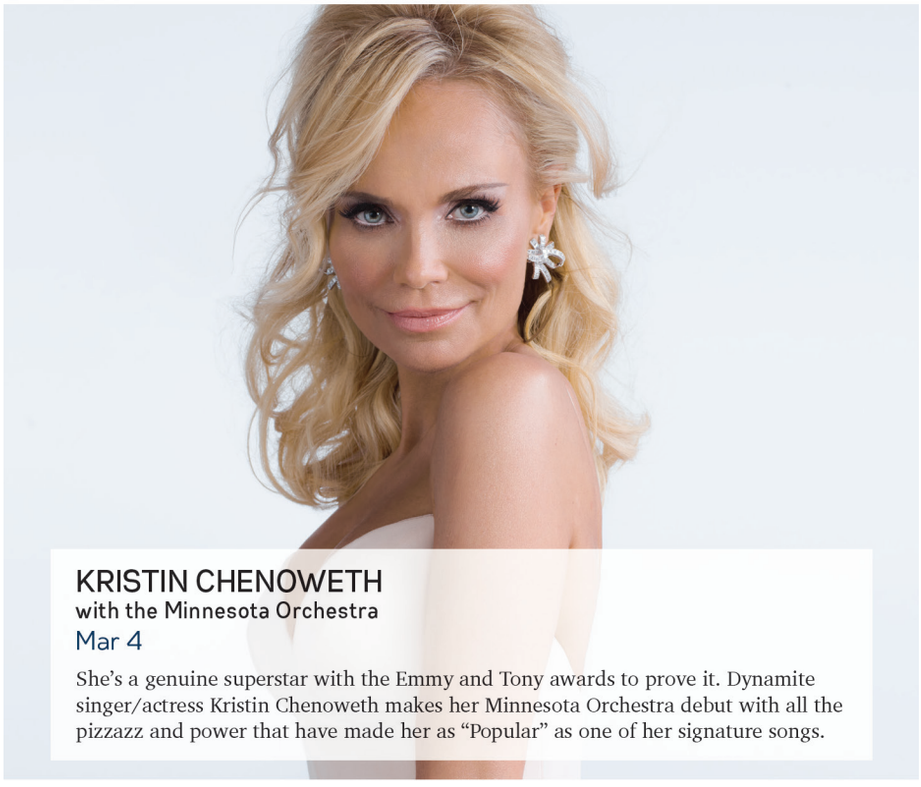
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two-and-a-half years ago, by James Still. Carolyn Pool plays the title role of CIA agent Miranda. Director Michael Robins relates that "Miranda begins a new assignment and must learn to connect with teenage and younger boys who are wounded because of being child soldiers and yet they are still kids. She must learn to fit in as a woman in a traditional Muslim culture. She must do her job with few of the resources she would have in a less conflicted place. Protecting her new assets is complex and changes many of her beliefs."

Robins's cast has been very cognizant of the trauma that *Miranda*'s setting portrays. He adds, "From research and discussions with people who have been there, we came to understand that people everywhere want to live their lives with all the joys and hopes and disappointments that come from being human. We need to let the story unfold as honestly and authentically as we can while being true to the needs of each character."

LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS

Jan. 21–Feb. 19
Artistry, Bloomington Center for the Arts, 1800 W Old Shakopee Rd. Bloomington
952-563-8575
www.artistrymn.org

In the early 1980s the 1960 B-Movie and horror spoof *Little Shop of Horrors* was adapted into a hit Off-Broadway and West End musical. It rivaled *Sweeney Todd* for sheer gruesome weirdness. You recall *Sweeney*'s human flesh in meat pies provided by a demon barber. Well, *Little Shop of Horrors* is about a florist who tends to a human-eating plant. The former premiered in 1979. The latter in 1983. Something seems to have been in the air at that time.

Joe Chvala directs the revival of the camp musical classic for Artistry at the Bloomington Center for the Arts and his record as choreographer for the Flying Foot Forum assures us that he will bring that camp element out most certainly. However, he is quite attuned to the year the musical hit Off-Broadway. With *Little Shop*, Chvala says he has actually drawn from his own emotional memory of living in New York City during the 1980s, when and where the AIDS crisis was wielding some of it meanest destruction.

He shares, "*Little Shop of Horrors* came to be, premiered, and played through some of the bleakest years of the AIDS crisis in NYC. In retrospect, I think maybe some of its appeal, especially to the gay community, was that we could sit and watch a mysterious threat to human existence from a distance and laugh and make fun of it, camp it up, even the plant, the threat itself, became a lovable puppet. And, somehow, even though only a few of the characters we care about survive, we could still leave the theater uplifted and touched by this story. Horror films always have that sort of appeal: the thrill of experiencing something devastating without being harmed by it. But I think *Little Shop* had a special, maybe subconscious, resonance during the times it played Off-Broadway in New York."

Chvala adds, "During the '80s, there were a lot of campy performances happening in little hole-in-the-wall theaters and bars all over town. Life was very scary but a camp perspective on the world gave us the opportunity to be sardonic and sentimental at the same time. *Little Shop of Horrors* embodied both ends of that spectrum. The world called for great anger and loss of hope and a cynical point of view, but camp comedy and finding the heart in bleak times helped to at least lighten the load."



Liv and Ingmar: Unfaithful Reveries. Photo by Sven Nykvist

LIV AND INGMAR: UNFAITHFUL REVERIES

Feb. 5–Feb. 28
Trylon Microcinema
3258 Minnehaha Ave., Minneapolis
612-424-5468
www.trylon.org

The Trylon continues its mindful inquiry into film classics with an eye to Scandinavia's historic contribution. The artistic relationship between actress Liv Ullmann and film *auteur* Ingmar Bergman is one of cinema's most fabled. Through Ullmann, the film maestro shaped some of the most penetrating films. Through Bergman, Ullmann delivered a profundity of consciousness unlike any other screen figure. Her magnetic inner gleam shines in the 1966 milestone, *Persona*, a film that jolted audiences around the world with its intense intimacy between women. That sort of intimacy was Bergman's signature as a so-called "women's director." Moreover, this signature is in evidence in the Trylon's eagerly awaited retrospective.

Persona opens the series on Feb. 5 and it ends on Feb. 28 with one of the few non-English language works to ever be nominated for the Best Picture Oscar, *Cries and Whispers*. As an adolescent in 1973 I remember other kids whispering, "Ooh! that movie is about lesbians!" However, the haunting *Cries and Whispers* is somewhat more layered than just that. Again, the intimacy between women is palpable and it lives on various levels.

Included as well are Ullmann's star turns in *Shame* (1968), Feb. 12–14, and *Hour of the Wolf* (1968), Feb.19–21, in which she co-stars with another quintessential Bergman figure, Max Von Sydow. And what could be more quintessentially wintry than a Bergman retrospective in February? ■

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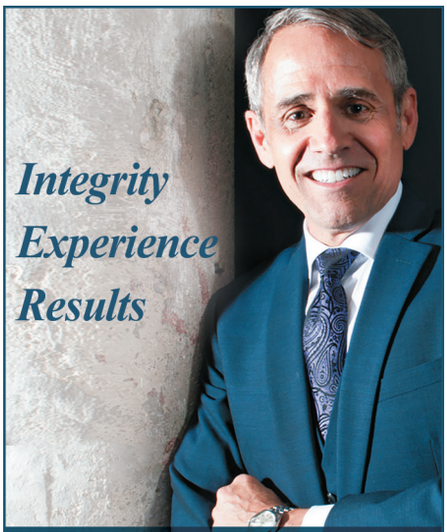


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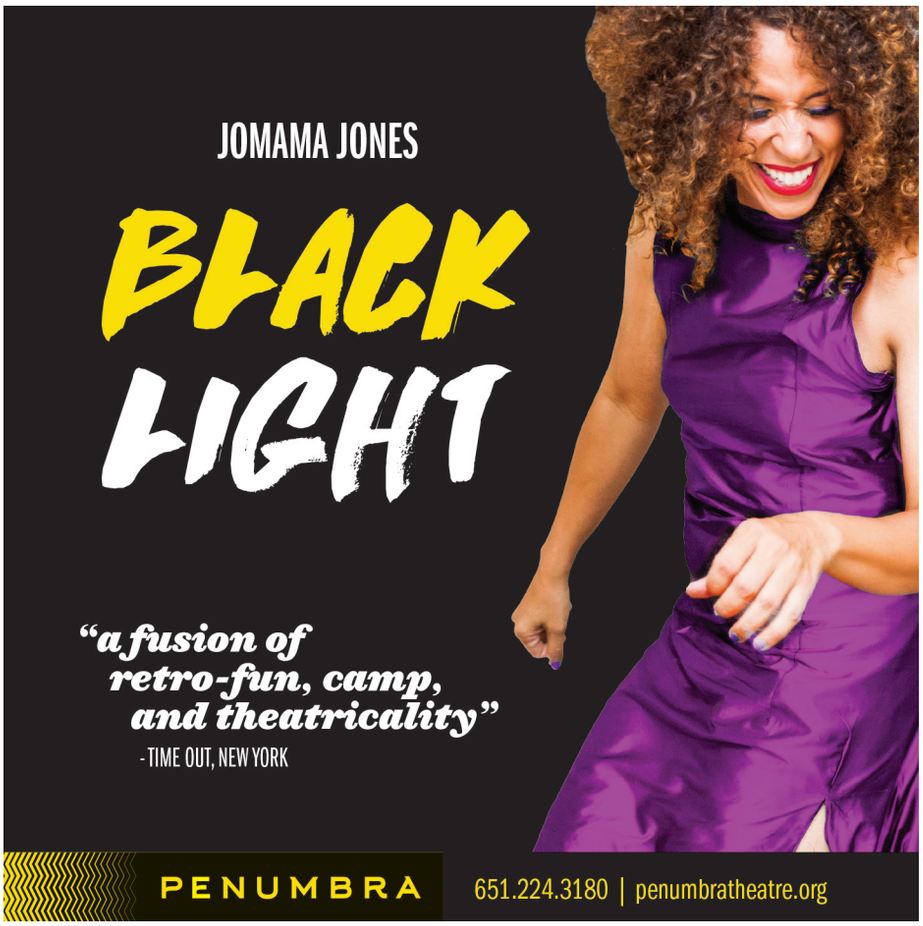


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Glass: cocktail or wine glass
Garnish: orange peel

Stir ingredients with ice in a mixing glass and strain into a chilled glass. Garnish.

Dinah Sanders, The Art of the Shim, Sanders & Gratz, 2013

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TRAVEL | BY CARLA WALDEMAR





Strasbourg (France) medieval half-timbered houses reflected in the river; Castles low and high on the Rhine cruise. Photos by Carla Waldemar

Gliding Down the Rhine

Castles on the Rhine; murmur those sweet nothings, and I'm a goner. Sign me up. All Viking Cruises had to do to seal the deal was offer guests a sweet promotional discount and I was out the door. Mention a brand-new 280-passenger ship (Heated bathroom floors! Free excursions! Food fit for a Michelin inspector! Free wine with meals! Sundeck for perfect viewing!) and my Visa started smoking. Somehow the cruise director even managed to procure a week without a single drop of rain.

And those castles. That stretch of the mighty Rhine has long attracted poets (Byron, Goethe), novelists (Hugo, Twain) and painters (notably, Turner) to ogle those romantic outposts of Romanesque, Gothic, and Baroque design presiding over hilltops at every bend, hemmed by undulating vineyards, crumbling Roman walls, trains scooting along the riverbank, and small towns ready for their close-up.

Another lure was the chance to check a number of alluring cities off my bucket list. First port: Basel, at the pinpoint where Switzerland meets France and Germany. Locals (lots of them, this sunny Sunday) actually swam the river as I strolled its banks en route to landmark Münster Cathedral of 1019, its glittering pink sandstone supporting two frilly towers. Kids were tossing rose petals at an emerging wedding couple while, above the door, St. George slayed his dragon and St. Martin gave away his cloak. Inside, philosopher Erasmus rests in a simple grave.

At the nearby Town Hall, Disney-esque murals of local history feature heroes clutching swords and horn-tootling mermaids. But my goal was Basel's famed art museum — actually, three buildings, the newest by Herzog & de Meuron. It's an all-day project to revel in many, many Chagalls, Picassos of every period, every Impressionist and Expressionist, and a gallery of Swiss painters losing their propriety in splashes of bold color. And a lovely courtyard café when your feet give out.

That night our ship passed through four locks as we glided between the boundaries of France and Germany, accompanied by fleets of swans and Sunday boaters, to dock on the German side at Breisach below venerable St. Stephen's Cathedral with its 12th-century pink sandstone tower to guide our climb. Inside, a modern stained glass window (the aftermath of war) and a spectacular altarpiece of Mary being crowned by a frenzy of angels arranging her stone drapery. Above the entrance, more angels pester a corpse to rise from his coffin.

We next boarded a bus to tour the Black Forest, of Grimm Brothers' fame, as our guide gushed over pastures of "happy cows." We stopped to hike through a lively village to the forest's silver waterfall.

Those swans followed us to Strasbourg, the most German of French cities (borders changed more rapidly than some folks' underwear). Here, bakeries offer both pretzels and croissants and cafés sport dual menus of pigs' knuckle and foie gras. This island city, bordered by both the Rhine and the Ill, was founded by Romans in 12 B.C., and their excavated treasures are on view in the town's archaeological museum aside the grand Strasbourg Cathedral of 1439, its mis-matched Gothic spires rise above magnificent stained glass (hidden from war damage in salt mines), one aisle a catalog of former emperors, the other portraying Bible stories. As its fabled Horloge astronomical clock strikes the hour, a tiny skeleton trundles off and newborn man appears. Then, follow cobbled alleys to the medieval covered bridge spanning a canal in the city's Petite France quarter, where half-timbered houses lean over the water.

Heidelberg, up next, would be a drive-by if not for its amazing castle, actually a silhouetted ruin of its former glory. This peculiar building bristles with add-ons and 'improvements' affixed over the years, as well as a prison tower where guests awaited ransom and a witches' tower, whose suspects were locked up to starve, freeze, or leap.

The lure of Rudesheim, a bit farther along the river, is wine: making it, drinking it in the wall-to-wall weinstube that crowd its narrow alleys. If time, or ambition, allows, hike the vertical trail dividing hillside vineyards for a super view.

Cologne is all about beer. Some folks head straight for the taverns,

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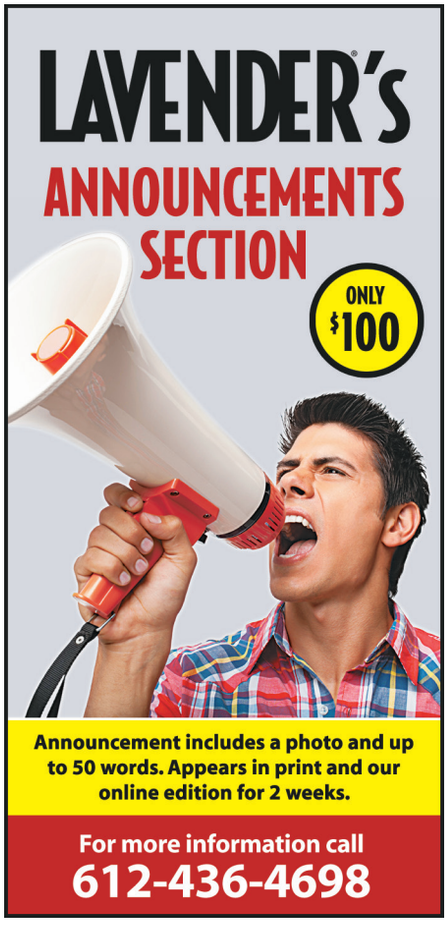
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others for the famed chocolate museum. I raced (as usual) for the historical stuff, mesmerized, once again, by those Romans. Julius Caesar conquered the place, which Nero, of fiddling fame, later called home. During WWII, while building an air raid shelter, a fabulous trove of third-century mosaics were discovered, floors of villas now on view at the Roman Germanisches Museum aside Cathedral Square.

Oh, that cathedral, largest in all Germany! Believers revere the relics of the Bible's Three Kings, whose skeletons, they say, are preserved in the golden casket on view.

Just behind it, another treasure house, this one of vibrant modern art, banned by the Nazis as degenerate, but purchased discreetly by a wise collector who later donated it to the world's viewers: the largest collection of pop art in Europe and third-largest cache of Picassos. Old masters aren't forgotten, either: the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum showcases Cologne's own artists of the 1500s (Albrecht Dürer among them).

Time to go Dutch: at Kinderdijk 19 windmills from the 1700s pose like sentinels along the dikes. Docking in Amsterdam, we bid goodbye to fellow passengers and crew (bear hugs all around). To plan your voyage, visit www.VikingCruises.com.

48 Hours in Amsterdam

This is the city that comes to mind when you think "Old World charm." I stayed on in the well-located INK Hotel, housed in a former newspaper office, bristling deliciously with cheeky snark amid its chic. From my window I gazed onto the gabled rooftops of tilting houses, huddling together for the past 300 years. Each of the city's 100 km. of canals, crossed via 1,500 bridges, boasts a similar streetscape of lace-curtained windows lush with geraniums and a lazy cat. As you walk these cobbled streets, a cantata of bike bells chimes around you. Perhaps it's the locals summoning you to the pub to join them for a glass of beer (hint: Heineken).

If you're keen to visit the Big Three of Amsterdam's museums — the Rijksmuseum (Rembrandts!), Van Gogh, and Anne Frank House — secure tickets online to bypass the impossible lines. This trip I let myself simply wander through the city's districts, from Red Light (tamed these days) to blue-collar-gone-posh Jordaan, stopping at flea markets (you never know) and shops with names like Suspenders and No Boys Allowed, amid pop-ups advising "buy now or cry later."

Okay, I couldn't help myself; I had to visit my favorite museums after all: the collection of Jewish synagogues (they escaped destruction, though their congregations didn't); the Resistance Museum, documenting how ordinary people (teenagers to priests, milkmen to aldermen) sabotaged the Nazis. New to me: FOAM, showcasing photography, presently the shots Chinese dissident Ai Weiwei took while under house arrests. And the tiny gem that's the Museum of Bags and Purses, art and social history combined.

Get your bearings via an hour-long canal boat tour, then make plans to come back soon by visiting www.iamsterdam.com. Celebrate the place where gay marriage has been legal since 2001, the first in Europe. ■






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Nighthawks

Photo by Hubert Bonnet

ROMANTIC VALENTINE'S DINNERS

BY BRADLEY TRAYNOR

Where should we go? What are you in the mood for? What about that one place? Are they still open? Do they even take reservations? Do you think they'll have anything available? Did we wait too long? These are but a few of the likely questions you and your significant other find yourselves asking each year at just about this time. Valentine's Day is right around the corner and, let's be honest, a dinner date for two is still the best way to say, "I love you." At least if you live in my house.

A romantic night out, for Valentine's or really any other time of year, means different things to different people. Obviously. But it can also mean different things to the same people, depending on the year, the particular chapter of the relationship, or just your peculiar mood on the day itself. Some years you want to don your Sunday best and spare no expense. Other years, jeans and burgers at a dive bar hit the spot. Maybe you're both ramen-crazy and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26



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Meritage

Photo by Hubert Bonnet

exploring the latest pop-up noodle place is on your bucket list.

Whatever your mood or state of coupledom, the Twin Cities is blessed with options. Ample, solid options. Yes, occasionally my partner and I will stare blankly at one another, unable to offer any ideas for our annual diner à deux. More often than not, however, it doesn't take long before we're rattling off possibilities and our problem then becomes just how to narrow down a big fat list of great ideas.

Whether it's feast or famine in the ideas department, worry thee not. If you've made it this far, you know I'm going to make your job super easy this year by giving you four sure-fire options guaranteed to suit most any mood or arrangement. Feel free to return the favor. I'm always looking for new ideas.

Side note: some of the restaurants listed below may have special menus for Valentine's Day. If that's your thing, feel free to ask when making a reservation or when you arrive. I'm not a particular fan of special menus that limit my selfish appetite, so I'm including four restaurants I know stand fully on their own, holiday special or not.

NIGHTHAWKS

3753 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis
www.nighthawksmpls.com

I was sad when Shorty & Wags Original Chicken and Ribs on Nicollet and 38th closed. For a hot second. That is, until Nighthawks opened. This self-described "post-modern take on the urban American diner" packs a perfect half-casual punch. And one of the best double cheeseburgers in town. We're talking Beef-Con 4 burger here, people. Rival only to the storied Parlour burger. Yeah, it's that good. And just the kind of place you can take a first date or your old ball and chain of two or 20 years.

MERITAGE

410 St. Peter St., St. Paul
www.meritage-stp.com

I gave you this recommendation last year and, because we still count this as one of our most memorable dinners ever, I'm giving it to you again. If you're an old-fashioned romantic (or dating one) who'd love nothing more than to spend Valentine's

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

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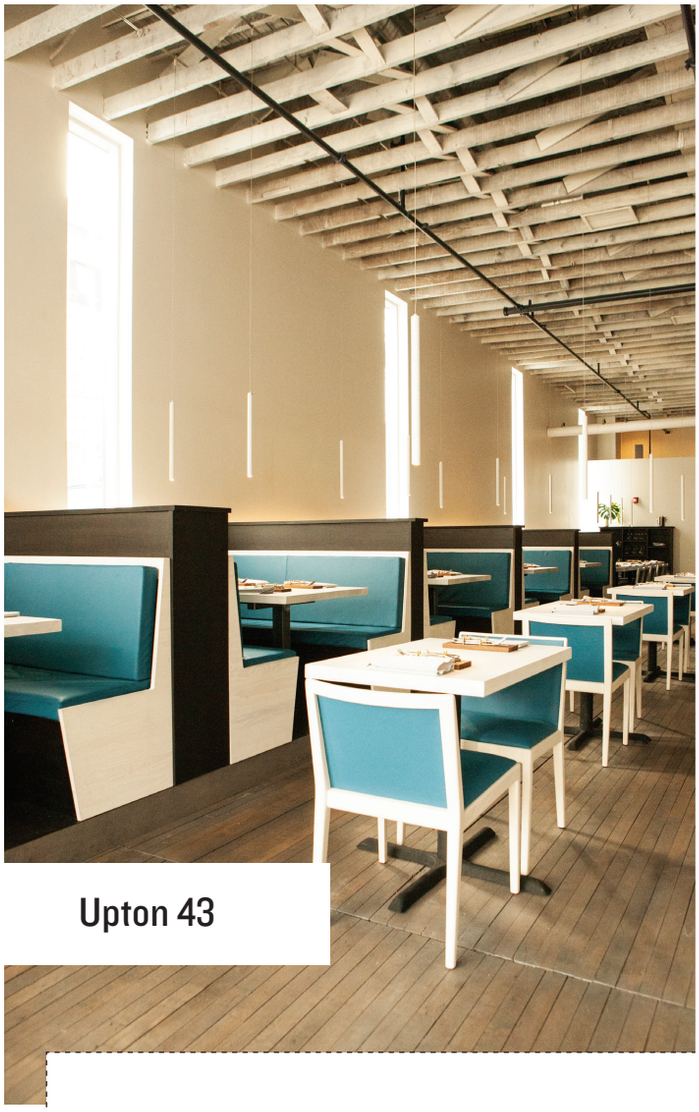


Photo by Mike Hnida

Upton 43



Photo by Andy Lien

Handsome Hog

Day at a beautiful little restaurant in Paris, but don't have the necessary swagger (or bank account) to pull it off, head no farther than downtown St. Paul to Meritage. The ambience, surroundings and, of course, food will transport you a lot more economically than a flight to Charles de Gaulle. And if you're worried French cuisine is too complicated or stuffy, fear not. The food is simple, accessible, and totally satisfying. Pay special attention to the moules frites and oysters Meritage. Our first visit, was for an anniversary dinner and we still count that meal as one of our best. Ever.

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HANDSOME HOG

203 6th St. E., St. Paul
www.handsomehog.com

Minneapolitans are rarely willing to cross the river for any reason, but this Minneapolitan (and former Texan) does so gladly for a heaping helping of fine contemporary Southern cooking. Brisket and ribs are near religion where I come from and Handsome Hog will take you to church. You won't have to wear your Sunday best, though, as the mood and ambience is casual and gregarious. Special note: if you and your date are pig people (as in, the thought of pork belly puts a little pep in your step), don't hesitate to order the whole roasted pork jowl as an appetizer. It stopped our dinner dead in its tracks. We sat dumb with a mouthful of the most wonderful, unctuous pork, staring into each other's eyes wondering how we'd ever put such porcine perfection to words. Impossible. Just go. Trust me.

That was easy! Now you're armed with four perfectly good ideas for Valentine's Day dinner. Truthfully, these recommendations would be perfect all year long. I don't want to hear any carping the next time Valentine's Day rolls around and you're at a loss. Actually, feel free to carp because I'm happy to keep giving you ideas. Your needing ideas means I get to eat more menus. Lucky us! ■

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HOW TO UNLEASH YOUR INNER SOMMELIER

BY SHANE LUECK

Photo courtesy of bigstock.com/karandaev

Wine. We drink it, we bond over it, we bring it to parties, we sip it alone after a long day. We don't need science to tell us a well-chilled glass of good Champagne is a singular delight, but beyond that, the expansive wine aisle can be a bit of a conundrum. The rows of labels, growing regions, grape varietals, red versus white; it can all be a bit daunting. But it doesn't have to be.

Bryan Keeler, the general manager of Lowry Hill Liquors and Lakeside Wine & Spirits, suggests starting your journey by trying a variety of wines. "If you're getting into wine, there are plenty of wines that are inexpensive that are very good introductions," he says, before adding: "Don't let the labels or foreign countries scare you. It may look like a lot of writing on a label, but it's just how that country categorizes things. Ask somebody at the store if they have any suggestions and be open to trying something new."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32


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When suggesting wines to people who haven't explored their tastes of pinot noir versus Bordeaux, Keeler usually suggests beginning with white zinfandel or riesling and then expand to other varietals depending on their tastes. "It's better to start light and work your way up to heavy and work your way up on the dryness scale so it's not too alarming at first," Keeler says. "And then in reds, a really good place to start is a Beaujolais, just a middle-of-the-road Beaujolais around 10 to 15 bucks and see if you like that and then move your way from there."

Jack Farrell, the owner and CEO of Haskell's, says the best thing to do is find a wine merchant who you trust, someone whose opinions you value, and make sure the merchant offers a large selection of wines from which to choose. "You don't want a store that has a wine selection that's 10 feet long," he laughs. "You want a good selection and you want someone who, after a few times, begins to know what you like and will look for things for you that he thinks you might enjoy. Everyone's tastebuds are different. If you like to drink sherry with spaghetti, go ahead. I think it's a terrible combination, but bear in mind, you don't please anybody but yourself with your taste."

According to Farrell, the best thing anyone interested in wine can do is to start keeping a notebook to keep track of your thoughts: when you taste a wine, write down what you did or did not enjoy about it. He says, "I guarantee by the time you've written down things after a few bottles you're going to be incredibly knowledgable about wine. A lot of wine buffs have their own vocabulary, but that isn't necessary either. You want to drink what you like, the criteria there is your own tastebuds. Price has nothing to do with it."

In fact, Farrell disputes the notion that good wine has to be expensive, arguing that some costly bottles wouldn't appeal to the average person's tastebuds. Instead of judging a bottle on its pricetag, Farrell explains the five things to look for in a wine: clarity (can you see through it, or is it cloudy?), aroma, bouquet (does it smell like its particular varietal?), taste, and aftertaste. He draws special attention to the olfactory senses required in determining a nice wine.

"The tongue and the mouth can only determine sweet, sour, bitter, and salty," he says. "The nose can distinguish about 60,000 different things. The nose is very important in wine, and that's why people never fill a wine glass all the way up. You want to leave a little air space at the top of the glass so that you can get the aroma and bouquet of the wine; that's very, very important when you're talking about wine. When all five of those things are in balance, the wine is just fine."

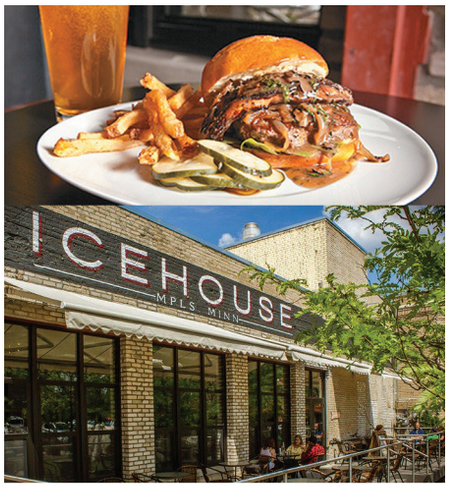
Following your own tastebuds applies to food pairings as well. Determining which wine to serve with a romantic meal is no cause for stress, but Keeler encourages thinking outside of the red meat-red wine, white meat-white wine box. "It's hard to say that it's common sense, because it's kind of like the American and English language: it kind of follows the pattern, but there's weird rules here and there," he jokes. "Any food, for the most part, you can find a red and you can find a white (and probably a rosé if not a sparkling) for it. Not all red wine is aged in barrels, so if they used cement or stainless steel, it brings out more fruit and it's more of a fresh wine and that could go really well with lighter foods."

The best guidance in terms of food is to go by the spices and method of preparation. A beef dinner with a heavy sauce might find its ideal partner in a red wine, yet Farrell would just as likely pair a Burgundy or pinot noir with a roasted chicken. This is in comparison to his recommendation for a white wine like chardonnay with a chicken dish that utilizes a white cream sauce.

"Primarily the spices and how it's prepared call for the wine type, not necessarily what the meat is," Farrell says. "But then there are some things that are just a perfect marriage. Anything with barbecue sauce, try with an Argentinian malbec. Malbec just seems to go with that hot-sweet sauce, the marriage is there. Another simple marriage, and easy to try, is take a sip of Champagne and a bite of a potato chip. The Lord made them to go together, it's a match made in heaven (no pun intended), because Champagne complements any kind of salty food."

Not usually paired with meals during the colder months, rosés are finding their stride in many circles. For winos that follow trends, the selection is ripe right now for rosés. For Farrell, rosé wines have never fallen out of favor, but it seems many drinkers are rediscovering the old favorite. "Rosé is hot," he says. "Tavel is a marvelous rosé, and in my opinion, Tavel is the rosé for red wine drinkers; it is really one of the best there are. Rosés are just on fire. It wasn't too long ago that if we had 10 rosés, we had a lot, but today we must have 60 of them."

Keeler agrees, saying customers at Lowry Hill bought more rosé than he ever expected in the last year. But he is also noticing some interesting buying trends. "People are trying to find some new things, and we don't necessarily know what category it's going to be but it's all over the place," he says. "Some of the off-varietals like syrah or petite syrah or these random varietals that people have never tried. They're a lot more open to some of the foreign wines. People usually, especially during tough economic times, want to stick to what they know, and now they're willing to explore and see what else is out there." ■



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LEATHER LIFE | BY STEVE LENIUS | PHOTOS BY ANDREW BERTKE

Looking Back, Looking Ahead

Before 2016 recedes too far in the rearview mirror, here are a few noteworthy leather happenings from the last months of last year.

At the conclusion of the Mr. Minneapolis Eagle 2017 contest, left to right: L. Russell Waisanen (Mr. Minneapolis Eagle 2016), Teddy Covey, Eric "Pup Omega" Stafford (Mr. Minneapolis Eagle 2017), Dick Salami, and Mike Sletten. Photo by Andrew Bertke.

Mr. Minneapolis Eagle 2017: Eric "Pup Omega" Stafford gained the Mr. Minneapolis Eagle 2017 title on Saturday evening, Nov. 12, 2016. The contest was held at (where else?) the eagleBOLT bar. The place was packed, with many former Mr. Minneapolis Eagles on hand to welcome the newest member of their brotherhood.

Many other local and out-of-town current and former leather titleholders also were there for the contest, so many that they wouldn't all fit on the stage at once.

Also competing for the Mr. Minneapolis Eagle 2017 title were Mike Sletten, Dick Salami, and Teddy Covey, all of whom can be very proud of how they handled themselves as contestants.

Stafford, the new Mr. Minneapolis Eagle, will compete in the International Mr. Leather contest May 25–29, 2017 (Memorial Day weekend) in Chicago.



At the conclusion of the Mr. Minneapolis Eagle 2017 contest, left to right: L. Russell Waisanen (Mr. Minneapolis Eagle 2016), Teddy Covey, Eric "Pup Omega" Stafford (Mr. Minneapolis Eagle 2017), Dick Salami, and Mike Sletten.

At Kinky Squares, the afternoon's second set of leather celebrities. Front row: Sue Olson, Pup Bruizer, and Ryan Brown; middle row: Derek Harley, Steven Patton, and PJ Knight; back row: Mikalya Stanek, Sam Carlisle, and Marc DeBauch. Photo by Andrew Bertke.

Kinky Squares: Minnesota Leather Pride presented Kinky Squares, an afternoon of fun and fundraising for charity, on Saturday afternoon, Nov. 19, 2016, at The Saloon. After the past two years of "Leather Families Feuding for Charity," this year the event's organizers chose another well-known game show to kink-ify.

Three sets of nine (or, in one instance, ten) leather celebrities populated a three-by-three tic-tac-toe matrix on the stage, and six teams (Minnesota Leathersex Project, Knights of Leather, North Star Kennel Club, DS Minnesota, Twin Cities Leather, and Atons) played for their designated charities in a tournament-style elimination.

Your humble columnist was the afternoon's master of ceremonies, which meant I got to ask questions such as "What fictional species has to have sex every seven years?" (answer: Vulcan) and "In Australia, if you've got a stubbie, what might you be holding?" (answer: a 750ml bottle of beer).

The winning team for the afternoon was Twin Cities Leather (playing for YouthLink, "helping young people move from homeless to hopeful"), but that team graciously split their winnings equally with the second-place team, North Star Kennel Club (playing for Secondhand Hounds, an animal rescue organization based in Eden Prairie).



At Kinky Squares, the afternoon's second set of leather celebrities. Front row: Sue Olson, Pup Bruizer, and Ryan Brown; middle row: Derek Harley, Steven Patton, and PJ Knight; back row: Mikalya Stanek, Sam Carlisle, and Marc DeBauch.

At The Nightmare of Christmas, members of the Atons of Minneapolis surround Kinky Santa. Photo by Andrew Bertke.

The Nightmare of Christmas: The Atons of Minneapolis presented The Nightmare of Christmas, this year's version of their annual holiday fundraiser, on Saturday evening, Dec. 10, 2016, at The Saloon. The evening, co-chaired by Steven Patton and Karri Plowman (two Atons associate members), was a lighthearted look at the twisted side of the holidays. Plowman told me that he and Patton tried to create a social atmosphere that encouraged mingling and chatting.

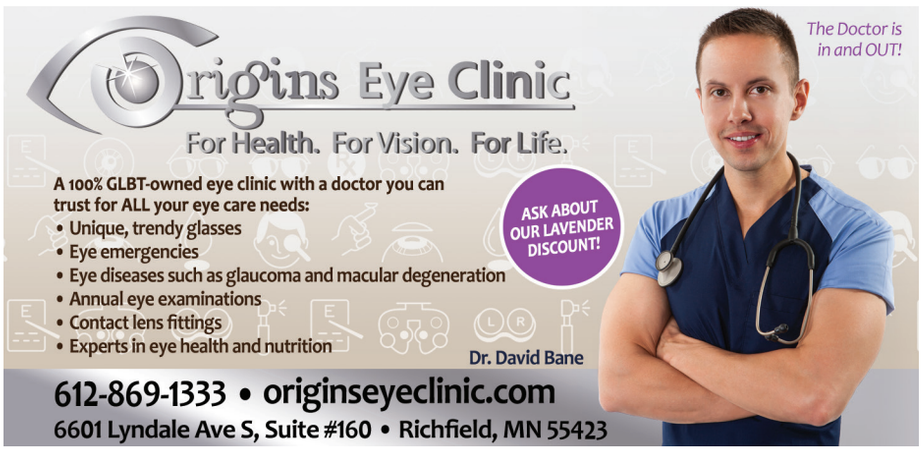
There were, of course, photos with Kinky Santa, but in addition, Mrs. Claus presented a bondage demo and Krampus was on hand to do some flogging. There was a (human) puppy petting zoo, raffles for prizes, and festive kinky games. Event attendees were encouraged to bring supplies for St. Stephen's Street Outreach Program and half the evening's proceeds benefited YouthLink.

Now, a look ahead: The Mr. Twin Cities Leather contest, including Kink U, is coming up Feb. 17–19 (Presidents' Day weekend). Visit www.twincities-leather.com/tcl-weekend-2017 for details. ■



At The Nightmare of Christmas, members of the Atons of Minneapolis surround Kinky Santa.

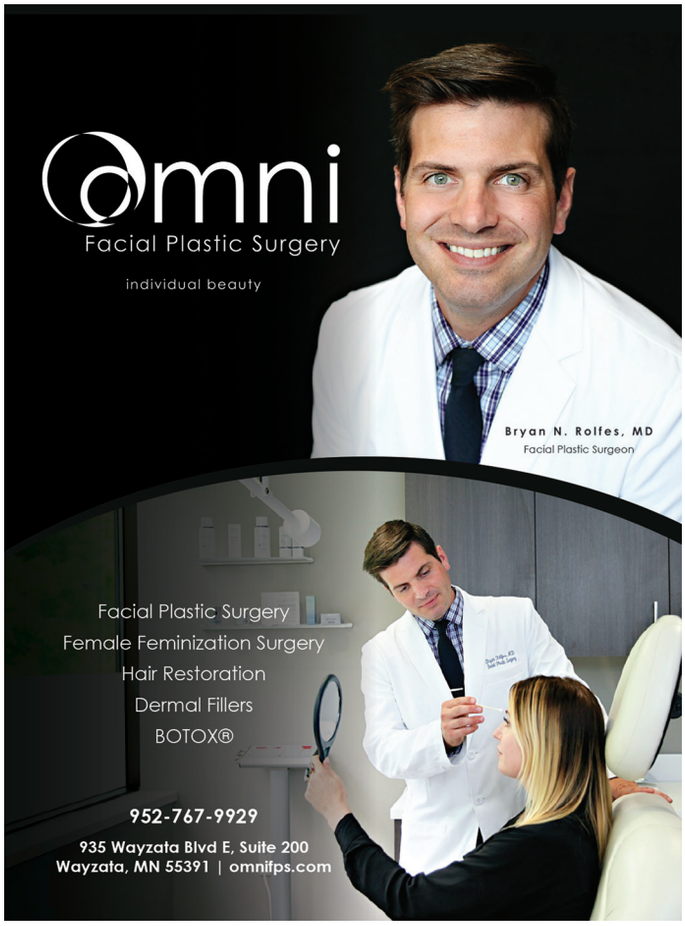

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CAUSES | BY JOHN TOWNSEND

Interview with ROXANNE ANDERSON, Honored Trans and Racial Justice Activist on Trump, Bathroom Policy, and the Lavender Community

You know Roxanne Anderson as last year's Grand Marshal for Twin Cities Pride. That honor signified a culmination of an activist life for queer and racial justice. Known for steering work groups on trans inclusion for the Minneapolis City Council and the Children's Theatre Company, Roxanne's other achievements include the position of trans and racial justice director for OutFront Minnesota, lead consultant for RoxA Consulting, co-owner of Cafe SouthSide, board chair of the Minnesota Transgender Health Coalition, program director for Trans Youth Support Network (TYSN), and co-founder/director of RARE Productions. This is in addition to serving as a co-host on KFAI radio's long running Fresh Fruit program.

Roxanne shared some thoughts recently about upcoming issues on the horizon as we look at a new political landscape in 2017.

John Townsend: There has been an unsettled feeling about the election, not just about Donald Trump, but also about Republicans sweeping Congress and so many state legislatures. What are your thoughts and feelings about how we come to grips with that?

Roxanne Anderson: I wholeheartedly agree there is an unsettled feeling. Folks have no idea what we are in store for and that is scary. Moreover, I think a lot of people do not realize what it fully implicates that we would elect someone who is not at all presidential. This is a person who has disrespected most folks we consider marginalized: women, queer folks, people of color. He has literally threatened to take most of what the Obama administration put in place and he was disrespectful to our current president from the very beginning of his presidency.

The sweep of Congress as well as state legislatures sends a clear message to all those folks. His recent request for those working on climate change amplifies that message. If you are not rich, white, straight, male, and on his side you are against him, which means for most of us, for my communities, it means that we will be targets, subject to those in power in a way we haven't seen in a long time.

I think the unsettling feeling for some is the realization of what we as a nation have done. A realization that Trump may take over our government in a way we are not ready for, that he has no experience, no training in politics and has never held any elected office. One clear example is how he has already cost us millions of dollars in security measures because he refuses to follow presidential procedure and the advice of the Secret Service and he hasn't even taken office yet. I think we come to grips by organizing, covering our bases, knowing the resources we have, building our networks, and avoiding the instinct to turn in, isolate, and not connect with our communities.

JT: We may well be going into a very divided public debate on the trans bathroom controversy on both the state level and nationally. What thoughts and suggestions do you have on how the GLBT community can win over skeptics? Are there any particular forces we need to be aware of?

RA: The arguments are the same: single-stall bathrooms do not need to be gendered. Trans folks are far more "at risk" in bathrooms than anyone else. All folks have a right to use the bathroom of the gender they identify as.

JT: I got a lot of positive feedback on the Children's Theatre trans-inclusion article. You were central to that. Are you lining up other organizations to participate in the training for this?

RA: I would love other folks to be part of sharing the knowledge. Education is the key to change. The more folks know about issues that affect others, the less divided we are. I am available and willing to work with those who (want to understand) inclusion as the answer.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38

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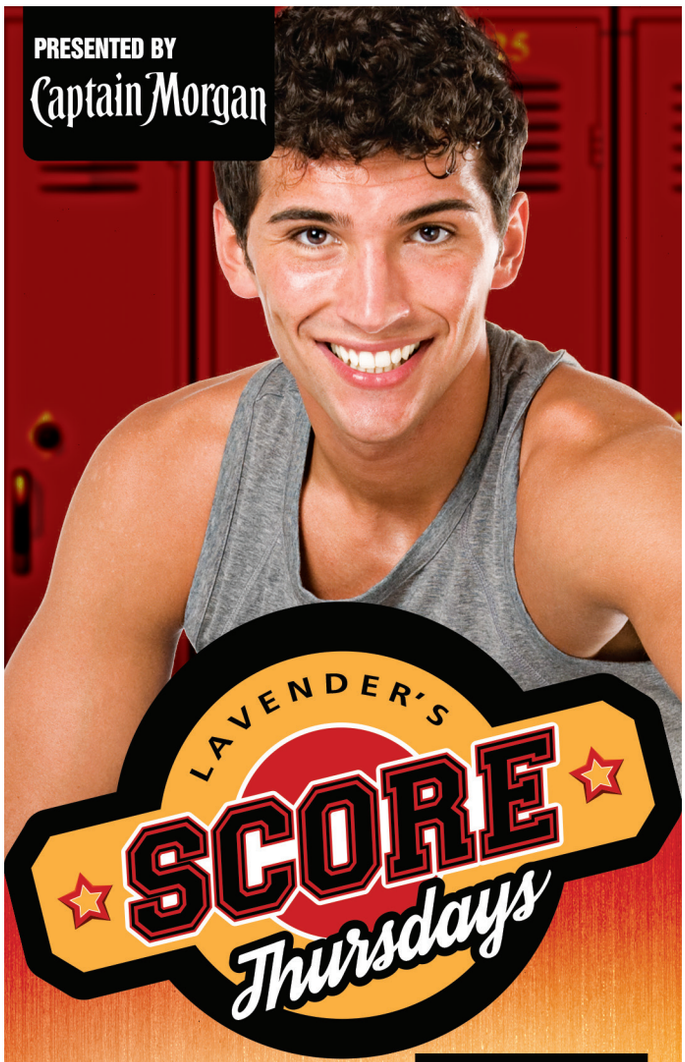
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JT: A lot of people in the queer community feel that we have not been as attentive to what Chelsea Manning has been through. What are you thoughts on this?

RA: I think Chelsea Manning is really not that different from any trans woman held in a men's correctional facility. Not safe. Period. CeCe McDonald said, "Prisons are not safe for anyone." I don't think we as a "GLBT" community are attentive when any trans folks are incarcerated. Look when our very own CeCe McDonald was held, charged, and subsequently incarcerated after a vicious transphobic and racist attack; we did nothing as a community. Folks that "act as our representatives" actually balked at helping, by wondering the level of guilt, by not standing with her from the start, by questioning her character, by not marching on the jail and (Hennepin County Attorney) Mike Freeman from day one. We should have demanded her release immediately. Every queer person in Minnesota should have held our system accountable for the egregious and aggressive attack of CeCe and her friends. We should have, we could have, but we didn't, we — the larger community — stood silent and allowed racism and transphobia to prevail. Only a small vigilant group stood with her from day one. The Free CeCe Committee was mostly individuals connected to TYSN (Trans Youth Support Network), MTHC (Minnesota Transgender Health Coalition), Youthline, and the GLBT Host Home program; all underfunded programs serving predominately queer and trans folks of color, that wrote letters that started a media campaign that incited artists and activists all over the world to demand her release, that pushed her legal team and connected with and visited CeCe. Not *Lavender*, not OutFront, not RHI (Rainbow Health Initiative), or PFund, PHS (Program in Human Sexuality at the University of Minnesota); not one issued a press release from these agencies in support of CeCe or charging the system with failure.

There is no doubt the criminal justice system needs to change. The system is built in patriarchy, on the foundation of racism and white supremacy. It works very well for the white male who conforms to it. Chelsea Manning therefore falls outside of the system not made for women, poor folks, and people of color. There is also no doubt that the larger LGBT community has to change. We must pull together, centering the most marginalized among us: trans, queer, and GNC (gender non-conforming) people of color. ■

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RIDE REVIEW | BY RANDY STERN | PHOTOS BY RANDY STERN

2017 Volvo S90









There is something about a luxury sedan.

The elegance is above par compared to mere sedans of the same size and heft. The styling is a cut above what is seen out on the roads. The amenities coddle you inside from bespoke audio systems to creature comforts. It is also a technological feast, with the latest and greatest gadgets, right down to those that can save your life in an accident.

Volvo has been in the luxury sedan business since 1969. The 164 was more than just a mere 144 sedan with an elegant front end. It sported Volvo's first six-cylinder engine and offered leather seating and simulated woodgrain accents. It would be the step up into a segment that is relatively new to American buyers. The 264 followed in 1975, following the same convention as before, with its better quality interior and six-cylinder power. This time, it was the troublesome Douvrin V6 it shared with Peugeot and Renault.

Where I come in was the 700 Series. It was the first Volvo I ever drove, being it was the largest Volvo built at the time. The 740 and 760 models showed off a more contemporary, but boxy, design. It offered more amenities than the 164 and 264, as it aspired to match up with the German and American luxury brands. Instead of just offering a six-cylinder model, the 740 came with a naturally aspirated and a turbocharged version of the four-cylinder "redblock." I had the chance to drive a 1985 740 GLE as a rental over one Thanksgiving. I thought it was one of the finest cars I had ever driven. It was absolutely gorgeous and drove exceptionally well. Then again, I was some working class stiff with a 1974 Ford Mustang II that was always on the verge of falling apart.

The legacy of the big luxury Volvo continued with every generation. The S80 was the last car to occupy this spot. It offered V8 power, something desirable by Volvo enthusiasts. This tradition continues with an all-new sedan. From a single look at the 2017 Volvo S90, its tradition of big Swedish sedans is definitely in place.

This car has its intentions stated clearly. It is executive transport. The size of the S90 equals those of other flagship sedans of its price range, which should create a fair comparison between them. To say the S90 is "big" is relative, especially when there are others cars that offer more presence and attitude. You can get that in an S90, at least when you get into the Inscription model like the one we tested here.

The S90's presence begins with a tauter version of the XC90's front end. It is lower, sleeker, and features a scalloped upright grille at its most prominent point. The Thor hammer headlamps flank this prominent grille, finishing a very contemporary, three-dimensional look that should be distinctive for everyone to identify upon first glance.

The contemporary, three-dimensional look continues with a distinctive roofline and side glasshouse, a multi-dimensional side design and rear end. Some have criticized the taillights, as they break from Volvo norms. I beg to differ, as it remains quite distinctive and easy to recognize from afar.

This T6 Inscription AWD tester came with large and nicely finished 20-inch wheels. Chrome trim is worn down on the lower body, setting off this Mussel Blue Metallic paint job that is the S90's signature hue.

Stepping inside, you experience what is perhaps one of the finest cabins in the business. Volvo wanted to exude luxury in its latest iteration of their big sedan and executed it with a unique and exquisite blonde/charcoal cabin, set with real linear walnut wood inlays. The instrumentation is a full TFT screen that can be customized for pertinent driver and vehicle information. Every switch, stalk, and knob has been redesigned for the 90-Series vehicles (XC SUV, S sedan and the upcoming V wagon), all are right to the touch and operation.

In the center is a tablet-sized screen that controls everything from climate control to additional seat adjustments to the Sensus infotainment suite. There are plenty of screens to navigate in the S90, but there is a learning curve. Once you got the setups down, it is rather easy to manage. Below, there are a few controls for climate and other vehicle systems, as well as some controls on the center console. The ignition switch is now on the center console, which is controlled similar to a knob.

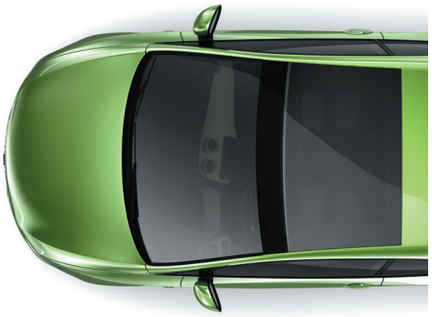
Front seating offers a lot of adjustments but also fantastic support and comfort. There are power-operated controls for rake, recline, lumbar, seat cushion extension, and bolsters. These seats can be heated or cooled, along with a massage function. Because it is a large executive sedan, expect rear seat room to be accommodat-

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ing. As a tall person, I found good headroom and legroom in the back. The rear seats are quite comfortable, too. The trunk capacity is only 13.5 cubic feet, which has a deep midsection cut off by the wheel wells.

Sensus drives a vast suite of infotainment options for the S90. In this Inscription model, there is a navigation system, Bluetooth connectivity, HD Radio and SiriusXM. Apple CarPlay is compatible for this model, too, only connected through the USB port. If you want the finest audio speaker setup in any sedan, select the Bowers & Wilkins option. It is not the number of speakers on board this S90, but the way it delivers sound throughout the cabin. To enhance the Bowers & Wilkins experience, there are three additional settings to create a sound reminiscent of a recording studio or a concert hall, for example.

A peek under the hood will find the latest family of Volvo Drive-E engines. The T5 engine offers only turbocharging for its 250-horsepower 2.0-liter, four-cylinder engine, the T6 in our tester adds a supercharger to the mix. In total, the T6 engine offers 316 horsepower of pure performance. An 8-speed automatic transmission sends power from the Drive-E engine through its all-wheel drive system in this Inscription model. The engine itself is familiar to *Lavender* readers, as it appeared on most of our Volvo subjects over the past two years. However, the S90 offers a more powerful version of the T6 engine and it shows its strength with smooth shift delivery and nominal lag from both engine boost elements.

As for fuel economy, the S90 T6 Inscription AWD turned an average of 23.3 MPG.

Ride quality is superb, offering a balance between stability and smoothness. You can adjust the Drive Mode for a firmer ride in Dynamic mode, but most S90 owners would prefer the luxury of Comfort or Eco mode. Through the curves, the S90 is poised without yielding to lean or roll. Push it hard and a bit of roll will appear in Comfort and Eco modes. That behavior gets eliminated in Dynamic mode, as it attacks cloverleafs and tight curves by going near-flat through them. Even with 20-inch wheels and tires, the S90 still feels superb on the road.

The high praise continues with the steering system. On-center feel is terrific, even better in Dynamic mode and with the active safety features in action. Turning is direct with nominal lock-to-lock action. The brakes are also good, offering great stopping power and pedal response. In both normal and panic situations, the S90's braking system did a superb job in keeping the car in place.

In terms of active safety features, Volvo offers the latest from its IntelliSafe suite of driver assistance technologies on the S90. These features include the Pilot Assist suite that takes complete control of the steering, braking, and acceleration when the situation counts for it. There is Park Assist, Blind Spot Information System, City Safety, and Large Animal Detection technologies included on the S90. The Sensus screen also acts as a rearview camera with cross traffic alert, when reverse is selected.

The S90 offers a range of four models to choose from. Pricing starts at $46,950 for a T5 Momentum model with front-wheel drive. Our well-equipped T6 Inscription AWD tester came with a sticker price of $66,365.

In all, the 2017 Volvo S90 is a superb automobile befitting of its position as the latest in a line of big sedans for the brand. It certainly earned its place among some of the best cars available in the marketplace, even in the face of a new generation of luxury sedans that are rivaling it. Among the S90's new rivals are the Cadillac CT6, Lincoln Continental, Genesis G80, and G90.

For the Volvo's cause, the selling point for the S90 is to truly have something luxurious to drive around with exceptional quality and execution. Above all, this is truly the sedan to go for if you are lurking around the $50,000–75,000 premium car market. ■






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SKIRTING THE ISSUES | BY ELLEN KRUG

Blank Slate

I sit writing this on the day of my 60th birthday.

God. I never thought I'd ever be this old.

Coincidentally, I'm also two days away from leaving my position as the executive director of Call for Justice, LLC, a small nonprofit that helps low-income people connect with lawyers. I've held that gig for five years; in fact, I was the founding E.D. While it's certainly time for me to move on, leaving is also very bittersweet.

What's next for me?

A blank slate; yet another do-over for what will be the last leg of my career. This time, the restart is named Human Inspiration Works, LLC.

As some know, ever since transitioning genders in 2009, I've spoken about what it means to be transgender via "Trans 101" presentations. Three years ago, I began developing a generalized diversity and inclusion training platform that builds on the reality that that there are relatively few Ellie Krugs running around, people who've gone from positions of white male privilege to living as female and part of a heavily marginalized community. While that alone doesn't give me credentials, it does provide something else that is incredibly important: authenticity.

I find that audiences crave authenticity in a speaker. It allows for connectivity to one's heart and mind.

What's most exciting about this next chapter is that I alone will get to decide what happens; it is very much a *tabula rasa*.

For sure, it goes without saying that I'll need to attract clients and do a good job. However, I will have no board of directors to report to or please; I'll not have a boss checking boxes on some nondescript corporate evaluation form; and most of all, I'll not have to play by someone else's silly rules.

It's not that I haven't earned this. I spent nearly 30 years as a civil trial attorney, and let me tell you, talk about rules. Rules of civil procedure; rules of evidence; ethics rules. That was on top of fighting with opposing lawyers, and, sometimes, fighting with the clients as well. Throw in the stress of 18-hour trial days, and, wow, the trade-off between big six-figure salary and peace of mind sure made sense for me.

My nonprofit executive director stint followed. While that permitted me great freedom to imagine and do things I love (like teaching about Minnesota's many legal resources), this too came with rules, like always needing to raise money. How tiring.

Now, I'll get to do things my way.

For the most part, this means using my imagination to create and craft meaningful trainings that challenge audience members to think differently about people who are "different" from "us." I've already taken steps to trademark the name of one talk, Gray Area Thinking, and plan to trademark the titles of other trainings.

More than that, I plan to conduct "community listening sessions" to better understand why much of America circled wagons this past election. Such listening will better inform me about how to fashion future inclusivity trainings that will touch not just a few, but many people.

And, too, I plan to hop in the car and drive across the Midwest and South to speak in smaller cities and towns where GLBTQ "activists" (if a 60-year-old transwoman can actually be called that) don't usually go. My goal is to remind everyone that we have far more in common than differences; indeed, most of us are afraid of the very same things: change, the unknown, and the risk of physical or emotional violence.

Does all of this sound incredibly naive?

You betcha.

But it's also quite idealistic. If there's only one thing to know about me, it's that I'm hopelessly idealistic, as in a King and Kennedy (Robert, the other assassinated brother) idealist.

You see, I'm in pursuit of something that's gone missing in our country: hope. I want to find hope and then share about it. Along a thousand miles, in front of ten thousand people, I want to share and spread hope, and if possible, even be hope.

Lest you disagree, I know that real hope is out there; it has to be. I refuse to believe that a single man, even if he's got a yuge ego, could possibly destroy all hope about what's good in America, in us.

With the long slog ahead, hope is what will pull us through. Thus, my focus on that one critical commodity.

As I wrote in this column last, I also believe in our collective resiliency and grit. Everyone has both of these things, even if you don't think you do. In 2017 and beyond, we're sure going to need tap that stuff too.

I'll be here, doing my part. I promise.

Call me, and I'll prove it. ■

Ellen (Ellie) Krug is the author of Getting to Ellen: A Memoir about Love, Honesty and Gender Change *(2013). She speaks and trains on diversity and inclusion topics; visit www.humaninspirationworks.com where you can also sign up for her newsletter. She welcomes your comments at ellenkrugwriter@gmail.com.*

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OUR VOICES

AT-LARGE | BY JOHN MARK

Baby's First Buzz

Toward the end of the show, after a laser-fast costume change, we would run to wait behind the curtain at center stage. On a musical cue, the drapes would open and a small circular spotlight would hit us. The harsh, bright light made us blind to the audience, but I could feel a buzz in my tummy as a sold-out concert hall of 1500 people would scream and applaud as we sang at the musical's climax. It was the greatest high that a 10-year-old could feel and a moment that repeated for a three-week run of shows that forever changed my life.

Three months earlier, callbacks featured about 20 to 30 kids sitting on the edge of the stage. A younger me looked around nervously. I didn't recognize any of the other kids, the room, the building, or the adults speaking to me, a strange experience for any child. Under the pretense that I desperately wanted to be a child actor, my parents had dropped me off at auditions for University of Northwestern's *Sound of Music*, which was in need of child actors to play the Von Trapp children opposite Northwestern undergrad and graduate actors.

I got the part, but I had no idea how impactful the experience would be. *The Sound of Music* is about a family, and being a part of the production felt like being part of a family. Watching the university production come together was a huge learning experience for my fifth grade self. It built an awareness of the village it takes to put on a show, from the musicians in the pit to the set designers, the costumers, and the box office staff. As a minor, I was assigned a handler to watch over me, help me with my six or seven costume changes, and make sure I didn't wander off or crumble under the pressure of a sold-out 1500 seat concert hall. Other than that, I was treated as a professional.

Rehearsals were long, expectations were high, and I discovered I was capable of more than I could imagine. As a little kid, the reasonability of carrying a role in such a large production was empowering. It told me I had value, I had talent, I had a brain, and I had the capacity to rise to the occasion. It was also the first time I experienced the performance buzz. The excitement of being onstage would rush in like a drug at pivotal moments in the musical; moments where the drama, music, and audience's energy would align. I began living for the spectacle, and the feeling of those moments.

I think about it a lot: a little John Mark waiting behind the curtain. It reminds me of why I love to perform and why I choose to make my livelihood in a creative economy that's unpredictable to say the least. When the synergy of the performers is right, the audience is engaged, and the level of production is appropriate, there's an explosion of positivity that occurs, the taste of which keeps people coming back for more. As artists, we live for that moment. It can be fleeting. It can be hard to find, and sometimes impossible to recreate, but the journey is often dedicated to the end described above.

Arts careers are diverse and ever-expanding. If you ask an artist why they do what they do, some may say for expression, some may say for change, some may say for glory, and others might just shrug. For me, it's the high. I'm an addict, still chasing the thrill, still just a little boy waiting behind the curtain. ■

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DATELAND | BY JENNIFER PARELLO

Safe Harbor

Driving home with my dogs in a blizzard a few weeks ago, my car was sideswiped by a semi. As my car spun out of control and crossed all lanes of traffic in a mad pirouette, my first thought was that the dogs and I were going to die. My second thought was that I couldn't believe I owned the car for three years and had never managed to find the button to open the back hatch. I always had to open it with the key.

Then, I thought about how disappointing this was given that I had just gotten married. My spouse would be furious at me for getting myself killed. She told me not to drive in the blizzard and I did anyway. I was going to die knowing that she was right and I was wrong. I was already mad with her about something else, and this just made me more peeved.

Miraculously, the car slammed into a guard rail instead of another vehicle, and while the action totaled the car, the dogs and I were unharmed.

It was 1:00 a.m. and the accident left us stranded on a highway that bisected the dark heart of an industrial wasteland. The only things I could see through the snow were the grim outlines of the steel factories, belching out fire and smoke.

I called roadside assistance. Because we were in the middle of a blizzard and unharmed, I was told that a tow truck wouldn't arrive for several hours. I gazed helplessly at the storm swirling around me.

The car crashed just off an exit. However, this exit was typically only used by the Mafia, who for decades used the toxic landscape around the factories to dump the bodies of their victims.

In the distance, I saw the neon glow of what looked to be a motel. I sighed with relief. Safe harbor! I gathered the dogs and we ventured out into the squall.

It's probably important to note that before we left the car, I texted my spouse and told her what happened. And then I pretty much ignored her alarmed responses and overtures to help me figure out an escape plan.

Why? Because I'm self-sufficient! I'm a rugged individualist! I need no one! And, yes, I'm an idiot.

We had bickered earlier in the evening about something stupid. And now I was punishing her by not letting her help me out of this crisis. Because even though I am 52 years old, I'm still a baby.

The dogs and I managed to get to the motel, which was exactly as scary as I deserved. It was a sex and drugs hangout that rented rooms by the hour, but the manager was kind and forgave his "no pets" policy to give us shelter for the night.

Later that morning, after the tow truck finally arrived, the dogs and I took an Uber home. It was a 40-mile drive so I had a lot of time to harden for my homecoming. I planned to walk into the house with studied nonchalance, rebuffing any warmth or comfort from my spouse.

But, as soon as I entered, she grabbed me and wouldn't let go. I tried to squirm out of her embrace, but her love worked like kryptonite against my superpowers of pride and stubbornness. I melted into her.

Even though I had gone through a wedding ceremony a few weeks before, I didn't fully grasp what it is to be married until that moment. It is that warm glow you spot in a storm that lets you know you've finally found your safe harbor. ■

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